

Dear members of the Education Committee

My name is Carolina Bortolieto. I am a resident of Brookfield, and am in support of H.B. 6663 An Act Establishing the English Learners Bill of Rights.

I'm also a former ELL student. I arrived in Connecticut from Brazil at 9 years old. I know from a personal perspective how important it is to invest in our ELL students. Former ELL students like me become CT residents who are invested in the future of our state.

Currently, there are more than 45,000 English Language Learners in Connecticut, but ELL performance is significantly lower across the board. Due to the lack of qualified interpreters/interpretation resources, parents cannot be informed about their child's progress in school.

During my time in Danbury public schools, from 4th grade to 12 grade, my parents did not speak english. As a result, they rarely attended parent / child conferences, because a translator was never available or even offered. So when they attended parent / child conferences, I had to attend as well and be a translator. I was a quiet student with good grades, so my teachers did not have anything to say about me that i didn't want to translate. But I can imagine that for students who may be struggling in school who are put in that position to translate, it will be very challenging for them to give feedback on themselves to their parents.

Danbury is one of the most diverse districts in CT, which has a high population of ELL students, if this is what I saw in Danbury, I imagine that other districts with less ELL students have even less support.

The result of this lack in the system is that students are struggling or falling behind, don't get the support they need at home, and parents don't feel invested in their parent's education. This lowers the quality of education our students are able to achieve.

Access to quality education is a right all children should have regardless of the language they speak. Clear rights help our community know where they can turn for support and guidance.

By guaranteeing parental rights in ELL students' education, children will improve in school; parents will be able to advocate for their child's needs and ensure they receive the best education.

I am for H.B. 6663 An Act Establishing the English Learner Bill of Rights.

Thank you for your attention,

Carolina Bortolieto